

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A skin aging-preventing or improving agent which comprises a substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase.

2. (Withdrawn) A skin aging-preventing or improving agent which comprises a substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase.

3. (Withdrawn) The skin aging-preventing or improving agent according to claim 1, wherein the substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is a plant selected from the group consisting of *Althaeaofficinalis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Actinidia chinensis*, *Gentiana lutea*, *Crataeguscuneata*, *Rehmannia glutinosa*, *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Rose canina*, *Petroselinium sativum*, *Hamamelisvirginiana*, *Asiasarum sieboldii*, *Thymus serpyllum*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Sophora flavescens*, *Cnidium officinale*, *Zizyphus jujuba*, *Citrus unshiu*, *Angelica acutiloba*, *Fucusvesiculosus*, *Tilia platyllos*, *Humulus lupulus*, *Citruslimon*, *Cassia obatusifolia*, *Magnolia obovata*, *Evodia rutaecarpa*, *Schisandrachinensis*, *Cornus officinalis*, *Atractylodes japonica*, *Digeneasimplex*, and mixtures thereof; or an extract thereof.

4. (Currently Amended) A method for treating aging of the skin which has wrinkles, is sagging, and/or has a loss of the skin elasticity ~~or improving the aging skin~~, comprising:

contacting skin of a subject in need of treatment with ~~an a skin aging-~~ treating
~~preventing or improving~~ agent, thereby increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or
myosin light-chain kinase in the skin and, thus treating the aging skin of the subject;

wherein the subject has wrinkles, sagging of the skin, and/or a loss of the skin
elasticity,

wherein said treating agent comprises a substance capable of increasing an expression
level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase;

wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or
myosin light-chain kinase is a plant, a part of a plant, an extract of a plant, an extract of a part
of a plant or a combination thereof, and said plant is *Digeneasimplex*;

wherein, if said substance is a plant, an amount of said plant as reduced to dry weight
is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent; and

wherein, if said substance is an extract of said plant, an amount of said extract of said
plant as reduced to solid content is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent.

5. (Withdrawn) A method for screening skin wrinkling- and sagging-improving
agents, which method comprises incubating skin fibroblasts with a test substance, and
measuring the amount of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase expressed in the
fibroblasts.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said agent is
applied to said skin in an amount of from 0.01 to 10 mg/cm².

7. (Canceled)

8. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance comprises a part of said plant.

9. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is the plant part described in Japanese Pharmacopoeia for *Digeneasimplex*.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said agent is in the form of a cream, an ointment, a gel, a lotion, a solution, a pack, or a foundation.

11. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is a plant.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is an extract of a plant.

13. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is said part of said plant.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is an extract of a part of a plant.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for treating aging of the skin which has wrinkles, is sagging, and/or has a loss of the skin elasticity ~~or improving the skin~~, comprising:

contacting skin of a subject in need of a treatment with an skin ~~aging~~-treating ~~preventing or improving~~ agent, thereby increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase in the skin and, thus treating the aging skin of the subject;
wherein the subject has wrinkles, sagging of the skin, and/or a loss of the skin elasticity,

wherein said agent comprises of a substance capable of increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase;

wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is an extract of a part of a plant said plant is *Digeneasimplex*, and the part of the plant is described in Japanese Pharmacopoeia for *Digeneasimplex*;

wherein an amount of said extract of a plant part as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein said agent is applied to said skin in an amount of from 0.01 to 10 mg/cm².

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein said agent is in the form of a cream, an ointment, a gel, a lotion, a solution, a pack, or a foundation.

18. (New) The method according to claim 4, wherein the subject has wrinkles and/or sagging of the skin.

19. (New) The method according to claim 4, wherein the agent increases force generated by skin non-muscular cells.

20 (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the skin non-muscular cells are skin fibroblasts.

21. (New) The method according to claim 15, wherein the subject has wrinkles and/or sagging of the skin.

22. (New) The method according to claim 15, wherein the agent increases force generated by skin non-muscular cells.

23 (New) The method according to claim 22, wherein the skin non-muscular cells are skin fibroblasts.

Claim 24 (New) The method according to claim 4, wherein an amount of said extract as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001% wt. to 0.01% based on the total amount of said agent.

Claim 25 (New) The method according to claim 4, wherein an amount of said extract as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001% wt. to 0.002% based on the total amount of said agent.